

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH
HELD AT SWANPOOL HOUSE, WELLINGBOROUGH
ON TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2014**

Present: The Mayor (Councillor G Lawman) and Councillors Allebone, Bailey, Bass, Beirne, Bell, Blackwell, Carr, Dholakia, Elliott, Emerson, Gough, Graves, Griffiths, Harrington, Hawkes, Henley, Higgins, Hollyman, L Lawman, Morrall, B Patel, M Patel, Pursglove, Raymond, Scarborough, Simmons, Timms, Ward, Warwick, M Waters, V Waters and Watts.

Officers present: Mr J T Campbell, Chief Executive, Mrs L Elliott, Head of Finance, Mrs B Lawrence, Head of Resources, Mr S Wood, Head of Planning and Local Development, Miss S Lyons, Solicitor, District Law and Mrs C A Mundy, Democratic Services Officer.

The Mayor wished everyone a happy new year and welcomed fellow councillors to the meeting along with his guests for the evening, representatives from the business community.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ainge, Maguire and Partridge-Underwood.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING – 19 NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on 19 November 2013 be confirmed and signed.

4. QUESTIONS, PETITIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

RESOLVED to note that no questions or petitions had been received from the public but a request to address the meeting had been received from Mr Banks which would be discussed under the Resources Committee item (minute 13).

5. LONG SERVICE AWARDS

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Resources was received on the long service awards for Mrs B Brown and Miss K Denton.

Both Mrs Brown and Miss Denton had served the council for 25 years. Mrs Brown had chosen to receive Northampton Saints Rugby Club vouchers for her award and Miss Denton had chosen Tiffany gift vouchers.

RESOLVED that the long service awards be noted.

6. LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE – 8 NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee of 8 November 2013 be noted.

7. PLANNING COMMITTEE – 13 NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee of 13 November 2013 be noted.

8. STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee of 20 November 2013 be noted.

9. STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee of 29 November 2013 be noted.

10. PLANNING COMMITTEE – 18 DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee of 18 December 2013 be noted.

11. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 9 DECEMBER 2013

The minutes of the Community Committee of 9 December 2013 were received.

Councillor Blackwell asked for advice on whether he should declare a registerable interest in relation to his appointment as a board member of Wellingborough Homes for minutes 4 and 6. Miss Lyons clarified that he did not need to make a declaration. She would, however, prepare and circulate a members briefing note for the purpose of clarity.

Councillor Elliott referred to minute 5 – Local Welfare Support and the promise of a members briefing note being circulated regarding discretionary housing payments. The Chairman clarified that the current position with the budget was that there was a slight overspend and confirmed that a members briefing note would be circulated.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Community Committee of 9 December 2013 be adopted.

12. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 10 DECEMBER 2013

The minutes of the Development Committee of 10 December 2013 were received.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Statement of Community Involvement be adopted, subject to the amendment in the report.
- (ii) the minutes of the Development Committee of 10 December 2013 be adopted.

13. RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 11 DECEMBER 2013

The minutes of the Resources Committee of 11 December 2013 were received. (Councillor Hollyman presented minute item 12 – w3 bus service and Councillor Bell left the room during discussion on this item, having declared an interest at the committee.)

A request to address the meeting had been received from Mr Banks and the Mayor allowed him to speak on minute 7 – local council tax support scheme 2014-15. He expressed particular concern that the recommendation before council was option two. He considered that option three would be a better alternative for the poorest people in the borough. Both options two and three were detailed in the report to committee.

Councillor Scarborough made further reference to minute 7 – local council tax support. He also considered that option two was not the best choice for the people of the borough. He proposed an amendment to the recommendation that option three; as outlined in section 6.1 of the report to committee, be adopted. This was seconded by Councillor Elliott, who also expressed concern over the future financial problems that the poorest people in the community would face should option two be chosen.

Upon seven members demanding a recorded vote, the amendment to the motion was put to the vote, and the following votes cast:

For: Councillors Blackwell, Dholakia, Elliott, Emerson, Henley, Scarborough and Watts (no. 7).

Against: Councillors Allebone, Bailey, Bass, Beirne, Bell, Carr, Gough, Graves, Griffiths, Hawkes, Higgins, Hollyman, G Lawman, L Lawman, Morrall, B Patel, M Patel, Pursglove, Raymond, Simmons, Timms, Ward, Warwick, M Waters and V Waters (no. 25).

Abstained: Councillor Harrington (no.1).

Absent: Councillors Ainge, Maguire and Partridge-Underwood (no.3)

The amendment was declared lost with seven votes in favour, 25 against and one abstention.

The motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

Councillor Emerson suggested to his fellow councillors, who were also county councillors, that they needed to consider carefully, during the decision making process, whether they should declare an interest, as 75% of the council tax went to Northamptonshire County Council, 14% to the Police and Crime Commissioner and 11% to the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

Councillor Bell responded to this comment which, as both a borough and county councillor, he had already sought advice on and had been informed that there was no requirement to declare an interest.

Councillor Griffiths made reference to minute 12 – w3 bus service and informed council that a meeting had been held with Stagecoach who had confirmed that a limited service would continue for a further six months and that they were looking at alternative solutions.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Option two be chosen for the local council tax support scheme 2014-15;
- (ii) approval be given to the amount calculated by the Borough Council of Wellingborough as the council tax base for the year 2014-15 being £21,834 (Band D equivalents);
- (iii) approval be given to the council tax bases for the parish councils and Wellingborough town;
- (iv) the minutes of the Resources Committee of 11 December 2013 be adopted.

14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 DECEMBER 2013

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 16 December 2013 were received.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 16 December 2013 be adopted.

15. AUDIT COMMITTEE – 17 DECEMBER 2013

The minutes of the Audit Committee of 17 December 2013 were received.

Councillor Bailey congratulated officers on the statement of accounts being signed off and submitted on time this year. This was endorsed by Councillor Scarborough. Councillor Bailey also thanked the clerk of the meeting, Miss E Davidson, for her services to the committee and wished her well during her pregnancy and maternity leave.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Committee of 17 December 2013 be adopted.

16. ALLOCATION OF COMMITTEE SEATS

The annexed circulated report of the Chief Executive was received on the adjustments to the distribution of seats on council committees and other bodies to which proportionality rules apply.

The report detailed the changes to the distribution of seats on committees and other bodies as a result of Councillor B Patel becoming an Independent member.

It was proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Scarborough that councillors be appointed, as set out in appendix B to the report, and also to the following committees and positions. This was a slight amendment to that detailed in the report:

Councillor B Patel, to the Appointments Committee and Community Committee, Councillor Carr to be Vice-Chairman of the Community Committee, Councillor Harrington to the Community Committee, Councillor Simmons to the Licensing Committee, Councillor Raymond to be Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor L Lawman to the Planning Committee, Councillor Carr to the Resources Committee and Councillor Warwick to the Standards Committee.

Councillor Graves would join the Board of Wellingborough Homes and Councillor Bell would join the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel, with Councillor Graves as his substitute.

On being put to the vote this was agreed.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the composition and allocation of seats on its committees and on other bodies as detailed in the report be approved;
- (ii) Councillor B Patel be appointed to the Community Committee and the Appointments Committee;
- (iii) approval be given to the allocations as set out in the report at appendix B with the addition of Councillor Carr being appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Community Committee, Councillor Harrington being appointed to the Community Committee, Councillor Simmons being appointed to the Licensing Committee, Councillor Raymond being appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor L Lawman being appointed to the Planning Committee, Councillor Carr being appointed to the Resources Committee and Councillor Warwick being appointed to the Standards Committee.
- (iv) approval be given to Councillor Graves joining the Board of Wellingborough Homes and Councillor Bell joining the

Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel, with Councillor Graves as his substitute.

A revised list of committee memberships would be circulated.

17. NOTABLE ACTIVITIES

The annexed circulated report of the Chief Executive was received on the notable activities relating to the council's PRIDE objectives. Councillors made reference to the following:

- Christmas lights switch on – the Mayor reported that this was one of the best he had experienced, with over 500 people in attendance.
- Carols in Castle Fields – the Mayor informed the meeting that the Civic Society had awarded a plaque and this would be affixed to the bandstand.
- Small Business Saturday – Councillor Allebone said this had been well attended and four new small businesses had recently opened.
- Wrapped up – Councillor Graves made reference to this campaign which provided heating, blankets, hot meals, tinned foods and other items to help the elderly and vulnerable to keep warm in cold weather.
- Successful Prosecutions – Councillor Emerson considered that the information relating to prosecutions was too detailed and inappropriate to be included in the notables report. Some other councillors also supported this comment. Councillor Bell responded explaining that reporting prosecutions in the notables report was standard policy and recognised the work that had been undertaken by officers in achieving these successful prosecutions. The information was already in the public domain via court records and reporting by the press and was therefore common knowledge. Should opposition members wish this policy to be considered for review they should take up the Chief Executive's suggestion of a discussion between the group leaders and himself.
- Wellingborough's Got Talent – the Mayor reminded members of this event which was to showcase young people of the borough.
- Holocaust Memorial Day – the Mayor reminded members of the event taking place at Wellingborough Museum on Saturday 25 January and of the service to be held at the Anne Frank tree in Swanspool Gardens on Sunday 26 January at 1.30pm.
- Carols on the Square – Councillor Morrall made reference to the event held in Earls Barton which was attended by over 3,000 people on Christmas Eve.

RESOLVED that the report and comments made be noted.

18. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE DIRECTION OF THE MAYOR OR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

The Mayor made reference to the tapestry in the council chamber which had been presented by Wrenn School for the 'Stitch-up Cancer' campaign.

He also thanked those members, officers, past Mayors and Honorary Freemen who had attended the Christmas reception in the Mayor's Parlour.

He reminded members that tickets were available for the Civic Valentine's Ball to be held at Wicksted Park Pavilion on Saturday 15 February 2014 at a cost of £26.50 per ticket.

Finally reference was made to the Head of Planning and Local Development who was leaving the council's employment after a number of years service to take up a new job at West Suffolk Council.

The Mayor personally thanked Mr Wood for his hard work, undertaken with diligence and at times great humour. During the Mayor's time as chairman of the Development Committee he had found him a real pleasure to work with.

Councillor Allebone as the current chairman of Development Committee also paid tribute to Mr Wood's skills, endorsing the remarks made by the Mayor, and personally extended his best wishes for the future and thanks to him for his friendship, advice, support and commonsense approach. He was very sorry to see him leave the authority but hoped he would enjoy his new challenge.

Councillor Bell reiterated the comments made and particularly referred to Mr Wood's drive in progressing the Stanton Cross development and also with regard to the work undertaken to reduce the number of empty homes in the borough. He wished him well with his relocation to be nearer his family and hoped he would visit when the Stanton Cross development began.

Councillor Scarborough also praised Mr Wood for his commitment in the time he had worked at the authority, during what had been a particularly difficult time for planning officers. He admired Mr Wood for embracing, not just his speciality of planning and development but also, the other parts of his role that over the years had been added to his job description. His expertise, humour and straight talking would be greatly missed.

Councillor L Lawman, as former chairman of the Economic and Environment Committee, expressed her sincere thanks to Mr Wood for his help and guidance which had been much appreciated and wished him luck with his new employment.

Mayor

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

